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### **Review of *Diverging Pathways: Social Structure and Career Deflections*. Alan C. Kerkckhoff. Reviewed by Karl L. Alexander, Johns Hopkins University.**

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and health. Some of his reforms are: tax reform, privatizing many public sector services, and keeping the social security system compulsory but making it actuarial and benefits relating to contributions, a voucher system for redistributive goals, and taxing consumption.

Lindbeck claims that the competitive and decentralized market system and pluralism go together. He favors state intervention to reverse the tendencies for merger, emergence of conglomerates and development of interlocking directorates in the corporate sector; in other words, he wants the state to bring back competitive capitalism.

What both Barr and Lindbeck overlook is that private markets and capitalism are not designed to distribute incomes evenly. In fact, the advanced welfare states are facing a crisis today because of attempting to function in a contradictory global capitalist system. Capital has no commitments to any nation states. Its favorite working class is that one which gives it the maximum surplus value. It would be very hard for any nation state to compete in a global market place using third world workers paid poverty level wages. This contradiction even socialist regimes have to face. Reforms recommended by the both Barr and Lindbeck may only postpone this crisis. Students of the welfare state, policy makers and administrators will find these books, thought-provoking and informative.

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Alan C. Kerckhoff. *Diverging Pathways: Social Structure and Career Deflections*. Cambridge University Press, 1993. \$49.95 hardcover.

For those enamored of the idea that we are makers of our own futures, *Diverging Pathways* should be must reading. Kerckhoff's most recent study of stratification in Great Britain analyzes the effects of structural "placements" in schools and the labor market. An exemplar of the new genre of status attainment studies which accord socialization and allocation processes coequal standing, *Diverging Pathways* takes social structure seriously.

Kerckhoff views the British experiences as a particularly informative counterpoint to the situation here: school-type distinctions in the British educational system are more sharply drawn and selection mechanisms are more highly institutionalized, yet at the secondary level and beyond there are numerous avenues besides college for acquiring valuable labor market credentials. The British school-reform movement of the mid sixties may have lessened these differences some, but *Diverging Pathways* overlaps this period and so affords a glimpse of both old and new.

The analysis is organized around the several stages of schooling (infant to junior; junior to secondary; secondary to postsecondary) and the school to work transition. The main lines of divide for the book's treatment of school structure are school type distinctions (e.g., at the secondary level, grammar, modern, private and comprehensive) and ability group placements (high, middle and low groups, but in some comparisons also an "ungrouped" option), while the analysis of labor market placements considers firm size, public sector employment and a four-fold industrial classification (core vs peripheral, overlaid on service vs production). Following the life-course chronology, consequences of structural placements are evaluated for achievement test scores, examinations passed, "qualifications" acquired and first job occupational status, more or less in that order. Do structural placements determine success in school and afterwards and if so exactly how do these forces play themselves out over time? This is *Diverging Pathways'* ambitious agenda, and in the main its ambitions are well realized.

Individual chapters are devoted to each school and work stage. Using extensive statistical controls to help isolate the effects of interest, analyses in these chapters assess determinants (including prior placements) of structural location, effects of structural location on outcomes, and possible mechanisms through which that influence is exercised. *Diverging Pathways* identifies teacher ratings (and presumably behaviors that revolve around those ratings) as key. At most stages teacher's impressions are highly responsive to prior placements and are strongly predictive of later attainments. Two final analysis chapters look at the orderliness of placements across stages—"career

trajectories", if you will. In a particularly clever exercise, Kerckhoff recalibrates all outcomes to a common metric to calculate, via the logic of path analysis, the cumulative "deflective" effects of structural placements at successive stages. These calculations are the basis for the book's subtitle.

The data come from the National Child Development Study, a truly extraordinary project which sampled all children born in England, Scotland and Wales during the week of March 3–9, 1958 (N=17000+). Information was gathered at ages 7 (at which age members of the cohort were in elementary school), 11 (around the time most would be moving from elementary to secondary school), 16 (their last year of compulsory school attendance), 20 and 23 (at which points school leaving and the transition from school to work are addressed). This is a remarkably agreeable design for Kerckhoff's purposes, providing data before, during and after each stage of schooling and overlapping practically everyone's entry into the labor force.

A brief review couldn't possibly do justice to the book's findings. In addition to the issues already mentioned, the analysis examines gender differences throughout (with many turning up), has a bit to say about single sex schools, and in a particularly interesting "tag on" toward the end compares cumulative structural deflections when members of the cohort are classified according to their father's occupational level. *Diverging Pathways* finds quite substantial effects of school placements at practically every stage, and because of strong connections across stages in placement patterns, this has the effect over time of greatly increasing individual differences in outcomes compared to what would be expected absent structural differentiation. However, the details differ from stage to stage and for men and women. Some of these differences make perfectly good sense in the context of the book's logic and conceptualization, but others simply are empirical findings. Also, there is some reshuffling of the deck at the labor market stage, mainly for men, owing to the importance at that point of alternative pathways to further qualifications not strongly linked to prior educational placements. These complications notwithstanding, the overriding message of *Diverging Pathways* is that school and labor market structures

are of great consequence and its evidence on this score seems to me quite compelling. The book concludes with a discussion of how stratification processes in the U. S. might differ from those in Great Britain and of prospects for reducing the unequalizing effects of structural constraints through school reform.

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J. R. Pole. *The Pursuit of Equality in American History*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press, 1993 [Second edition, revised and enlarged]. \$35 hardcover.

Although Americans value equality, in practice, this equality has never been very complete. What, after all, in the context of the U. S. constitution, does equality mean? Here is a document that promised equality, at the same time that it withheld the benefits of that equality from women, slaves, and persons from the less propertied classes. In *The Pursuit of Equality in American History* (2nd Edition), J. R. Pole traces this ambiguous legacy from pre-Revolutionary times to the modern era.

The original concept of equality was a republican one, through which the authors of the Constitution sought to distinguish the new, United States of America from the European monarchies. In Europe, titles could be conferred through heredity; in the U.S., heredity conferred no such benefits. This distinction was both vital and limited: vital because it signified the establishment of an American republic, and limited because the equality before the law was originally protective rather than interventive. Seen from this perspective, the right to own African-American slaves was a property right to be defended, rather than a violation of human rights that warranted intervention. Echoes of this distinction can be heard in the present day, when even though the federal government intervenes with much greater frequency, there is a tendency to flinch from addressing basic human needs—the provision of housing and medical care, for example—because invariably, they involve somebody else's property rights.